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**STATE TRUST LAND WITHIN PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT
AND CHACO CULTURAL NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK TO BE
SWAPPED FOR ACRES OF FEDERAL LAND**

(ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico) - New Mexico State Land Commissioner Ray Powell signed conveyance documents with Sylvia Baca, Department of the Interior Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management today that will enhance and protect the Petroglyph National Monument and Chaco Cultural National Historic Park.

During the signing ceremony at Petroglyph National Monument, in Albuquerque, Powell said more than 3,700 acres of state trust land, located in environmentally or culturally sensitive areas, will be exchanged for U.S. Bureau of Land Management Land (BLM) properties that are more suitable for earning revenues to support education.

“The National Park Service will protect these very special and unique areas we are offering, since they fall within National Parks,” Powell said. “In exchange, the state will obtain land which is more appropriate for commercial uses and which will help keep our citizens’ tax bills down.

“This is a ‘win-win’ agreement that has been in the works for several years now,” said Acting Assistant Secretary Baca. “This is an example of what can be accomplished through a cooperative effort between government agencies to benefit all citizens. These national treasures can now be preserved for future generations to enjoy.”

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The state trust land within Petroglyph National Monument, near Albuquerque, and inside Chaco Cultural National Historic Park, in northwestern New Mexico, will be exchanged for federal land of equivalent value that is more suitable for commercial development. The public lands are located near Cuba and Las Cruces.

A dollar value for the land exchanged is estimated at \$2 million.

The Commissioner of Public Lands is an elected state official responsible for administering the state's land grant trust. Thirteen million acres of land were granted to New Mexico in 1898 and 1912. Each tract is held in trust for schools, universities, as well as hospitals that serve children with physical, visual, and auditory disabilities. In fiscal year 1999, the trust lands and permanent funds produced more than \$254 million in income for the beneficiaries.

BLM has been working with the State Land Office to complete the exchanges since the early 1980s. The completion of the Petroglyph and Chaco exchanges will allow for the preservation of historic and cultural resources, while allowing the State to acquire lands that can generate revenue for all of the citizens of New Mexico. Additionally, this also allows the BLM to pay off their debt owed to the State from the Santa Ana Exchange which was completed in 1996.

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